ARKEN SWORD
Nº11
50p
INTERVIEWS
ALAN MOORE
STEVE DILLON
COLIN BAKER

EDITORIAL

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Hi There,

Late again, but who cares? At least I always turn up.

To the left is the cover of what was going to be Dilemma 3, but since Dilemma is no more I thought it would be a shame if it was never printed.

I have, however, brought out Short Fuze with Graham Cousins & John Jackson. It has strips by fans and illos by pros. The fans are:Eddie Campbell,Brian Caffe,Lew Stringer,Phil Elliott, Glenn Bakin,Bambos Georgiou,Mark Leckett, Myra Hancock,Howard Stangroom,Dave Harwood and us three editors. The pros are:Ian Gibson,Walt Simonson, Brian Bolland,William Simpson,Dave Gibbons, Hunt Emerson,Kevin O'Neill,Ron Smith and Alan Davis. It is 48 A5 litho pages for £1 (sent 1st class) and you can get it from me.

And if you don't want to subscribe then you can get ARE from the tables of Colin Bayley or Steve Walsh at Comic Marts, or from Nostalgia & Comics in Birmingham, or the Sheffield Space Centre, or from Fast Fiction

who stock all the latest zines. I also plonk some down on Martin Lock's table at the Westminister Marts when he's not looking.

Thanks to all the people who have given their time and energy to make this zine possible,especially: Alan Davis for the cover,Alan Moore, Steve Dillon and Colin Baker.

Until next time,

BEST WISHES,

Paul

3/10/84

ARKENSWORD 11 is 50p(70p by post) from Paul Duncan.

5-issue subscription is £3, and you get freebies with that as well. Issues of 8,9 & 10 are still on sale. (£2 for all 3 anyone?)

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Alan Davis:Cover
Bambos Georgiou:18,19
Dave Harwood:13
John Jackson:11
Mark Leckett:8,9,18,14
Mark McKenzie:2
Sean O'sullivan:17

SPIN-OFFS

by Maureen James

There can't be many people reading this who haven't seen Star Wars, The Empire Strikes Back, E.T. or at least one of the many films which have given birth to spin-offs in the form of toys, stickers, keyrings, and even tee-shirts and pillow-slips. (Though who could sleep easily with little Darth Vaders marching over their pillows is beyond me...) However, all these spin-offs were directly inspired by spin-offs from as far back as the 1930's & 40's; and these early spin-offs were mostly from radio programmes and comics

These items seem to have been badly neglected, apart from the latter-day posters and badges, how often do you hear from them? Do you know which year it was that 'Topps Chewing Gum' issued a set of Marvel Superhero stickers? Do you know the year when a Superman watch first appeared? Do you know there were once 'secret societies' run by superheroes? If your answers are no, no, and no then you're in the same position I was in before I began writing this article! But if you want your answers to be yes, yes and yes then read on:

When you start thinking of spin-offs one of the first things that comes into your mind are gum cards/stickers; with the influx of Superman gum cards issued after the first film was released you could be excused for thinking thta gum cards are a present-day innovation. However, you would be slightly off the track there, the very first gum cards to feature a comic-book character were issued in 1896 and featured the Yellow Kid who made his debut in the New York Sunday World and later graduated into his own comic. There were 25 cards in this set. There was no specific 'story' told with these cards, each one depicting the Kid in a one-picture cartoon. The cards in this series are highly prized by collectors now, not the least because they were the forerunners of all that have appeared since; in fact you could call them the equivelent of a copy of Action#1 for comic collectors!

To move on to the 1930's; the most common gum cards depicted a comic character with a long tail - Mickey Mouse. There were ninety six cards in the first set, each with a joke picture on the front, and a question on the back. The catch was that you got the answer to the question on the next card,along with another question which was answered on the NEXT card and so on... I wonder how many collectors there are today who are still puzzling over the answers to some of the questions, not having all the cards in their collection? This series was such a success that a second series was issued, a set of 24 showing Mickey with various actors and actresses - drawn in a cartoon style. In this set the cards are numbered from 97 to 120, and are very rare; two albums could also be bought for mounting your sets, and these are even rarer. The covers of the albums were beautifully illustrated and I wouldn't like to hazard a guess at how much they would be sold for now!

I must admit that the one set of spin-offs that has interested me more than any others since I first read about them are the toys, specifically the various dolls. Obviously everyone reading this has heard of/seen the action figure type dolls of Spiderman, the Hulk, Batman, Superman and various other heroes and villains. They pop up in most toyshops and you see them advertised in comics etc. Likewise, a year or two ago there were two soft bodied 'baby' dolls advertised in the US marvels -Namely Spiderman and Captain America. But did you know the first ever'doll' of a comic character (not counting those based on newspaper strips) was a wooden jointed Superman doll issued by Ideal in 1939? The doll was, I believe, about a foot tall and was modelled on the comic book illustrations - Superman' uniform is painted directly onto the wood in bright blue and red, with yellow on the belt and insignia. A cloth cape adds to the Superman 'look', but most of these (if you see them) are now minus the cape and a bit chipped. With an expert hand however, they can soon be rejuvenated - red felt is good for the cape, but 'mock velvet' hangs better. Personally, I love these dolls, especially as I've actually had the luck to handle one when a friend of mine from the US came over. But I digress ...

In the 1930's Tarzan had made appearances in comics & in Sunday strips, and an enterprising manufacturer produced a set of 50 cards which related the story of 'Tarzan and the Crystal Vault of Isis'. The front of each card showed us a scene from the story, while on the back there was an episode. They became popular with collectors and have also increased in value, as apart from the original books and comics etc there are not a lot of spin-offs on Tarzan to collect. The art was not very attractive on these cards, but at the same time there was a certain charm about them.

Superman has always been a popular figure on merchandise,and gum cards are no exception. The first series of Superman gum cards were not those which were issued after the Superman film was released but a set issued in 1940. There were 72 cards in the set, each depicting Superman in action, with the 'story behind the picture' printed on the back. Who the artist on these cards was I am unable to find out, but they are very reminiscent of the first comic books to feature Superman - I have toyed with the idea that they were straight reproductions from comic panels, but this conclusion could be totally erroneous. Personally I find these early Superman cards more attractive than the latter day ones, mind you, I have to admit that the cards showing scenes from the film are quite a cheap way of collecting 'stills'.

Other popular 'picture cards' of comic characters have been those given with ice cream and smoot cigarettes, at least in this country, no doubt in the USA there have been others I haven't heard about. One of the most common series was 'The Hulk', which seemed to be released to tie in with the Hulk TV series - these were a set of cards which depicted the Hulk in various action poses while giving facts about him in relation to various 'things' in nature such as the strength of a gorilla for instance. The artwork was highly coloured, the facts fairly interesting; not a bad series on the whole. In passing I must mention the other series of Hulk cards which appeared inthe 1970's; for these you could get an album, in fact the album was given away free with the first issues of HULK COMIC which was produced by Marvel UK. These cards were smaller than the usual gum cards (as were the lolly cards) and related 4 stories of the Hulk similiar to those shown on TV. Each card bore a drawing on the front with NO episode on the back; they fitted into places in the album(you could peel off the back which would reveal a sticky surface) where the episode for that card would be told. Some fitted together to make one large picture. The picture on the front of the album showed Lou Ferrigno protraying the Hulk, while inside some of the cards were drawn in the 'Marvel Style' - while one of the stories related the Hulk's origin using stills from the TV series.(The same stills that were printed on the Hulk Poster Magazine and the Hulk Fotonovel) It was quite a nice idea, and would fit well into a gum card collection.

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Superman has had other toys based on him and his exploits, too. A very early one appeared in 1944; Superman racing the Airplane. This toy was made from tin, brightly painted and was either clockwork or friction - it is now highly prized by collectors, as are many of these clockwork toys, since in many cases there are only a very few which have been saved. Indeed, one of the books I used for reference in this article says that in some cases there are only about six that have been saved out of the hundreds that were made. If you

have one of these, then you are lucky indeed.

Earlier still were the beautiful velvet dolls of Mickey and Minnie Mouse which were issued in 1931 - looking at the craftmanship which has gone into these dolls makes me wonder why some enterprising manufacturer doesn't produce a series of 'character' dolls like these now. Some of the comic characters who are featured now would make very interesting dolls - what about a velvet Nightcrawler doll? And of course, we do have a Cerebus soft toy already.

The Original Captain Marvel has had dolls based on him over the years, also a set of Captain Marvel racing cars which were issued in 1948. They were called Captain Marvel Lightning Racing Cars and there were four in the set; all showing the good Captain himself on one side, and his name emblazoned on the other.

Popeye, as a comic character, had many dolls based on him, including a wooden jointed one in a similiar style to the Superman one mentioned above - but there are also dolls of char-cters connected to the Popeye mythos such as Olive Oil and Wimpy. Again there are also clockwork toys; and these feature Popeye walking, as a cowboy, in a rowing boat etc. Again, there is a market for these as their scarcity grows. But I wonder how many comic collectors have one or two of these tucked away as a legacy from their(or their parents')childhood without realising their true worth?

Watches,too, had their 'boom' years as spin-offs from comics; the rarest watch was made in 1939 and both watch & box were designed by Alex Raymond who was, of course, the artist on the Flash Gordon comic series - the watch, needless to say, was a Flash Gordon watch.

An even rarer Flash Gordon watch was produced as recently as 1971 - but only 200 were made; this watch & the box it was in was designed and signed by Grey Morrow.

But not all watches produced have featured space heroes - many of them have featured the superheroes and heroines of the time too. Perhaps the most famous of these were the watches and pocket watches which featured our old friend Superman; the wrist watch was produced by New Haven and was mounted on a leather strap. The face of the watch showed Superman in a standing pose, in full colour, with the hands of the watch issuing from his belt buckle and the Superman logo underneath. The box it was packed in showed Superman, hands on hips, ready for action and was lettered as follows; 'Superman wrist watch. True Time Appeal For The Man Of Steel' and added 'A guaranteed American Watch for Young Americans!' Who said that media hype was a new invention...??

Personally, I find it a more attractive watch than some of the later day 'Star Wars' and 'ET' watches that I've seen. The Superman wrist watch was produced in 1939 & twenty years later a Superman pocket watch appeared portraying Superman flying high over Metropolis - rather eyecatching! Then in the 60's-early 70's yet another Superman pocket watch appeared, produced by the same makers (Bradley Time Co.); this one had an animated Superman second hand, but although it is much sought after by collectors and those curious, it hasn't the same charm as the originals.

The 'Big Red Cheese'(Captain Marvel) naturally featured on a watch, and members of his 'supporting cast' were also awarded watches of their own. This way fans in 1948 could buy a watch with either Captain Marvel or Captain Marvel Junior pictured on it - or if you were a female fan you culd have your very own watch with Mary Marvel. Obviously female fans weren't expected to want watches with male superheroes on!! All three were well crafted and came in attractive boxes with artwork by C.C.Beck; the artwork on the Captain Marvel box shows our hero in an action pose throwing a small glider-type of craft, and his emblem is also shown on the face of the watch with some small differences in the artwork.

With the coming of the Batman tv series in the 1960's Batman watches appeared, but not the camp type of illustrations you might expect at that time.(Well there were one or two like that - but they died out rather quickly). The best Batman watch came in a box which depicted Batman as the 'dark avenger' but showed no picture of him on the watch itself; instead the whole watch had a case covering it shaped like a bat wing, in die cast metal. Very atmospheric. And in my opinion a good idea.

Another 'quality' item which appeared in the days of the Batman tv series was a Batman clock. These are very difficult to get hold off now because they had only a very limited short run. Sad to say, once again there was no picture on the face of the clock, but the plastic case was very attractive and showed a Batman who looked more like a bat than human, and who also looked rather evil. In fact, this face no doubt gave fans who hadn't known anything about the early Batman a good idea of how he was first visualised and made them realise what a fiasco parts of the tv series was.

Switching to more recent times, there have been various superhero and heroine watches featuring characters from both Marvel and DC - but none of them have really gone on to become as popular as the originals - overkill? Perhaps. Or perhaps the fan of today isn't as interested in the spin-offs?

My final word on watches though must be this; all the watches I've mentioned so far have featured heroes from the USA. Well, one of our most famous comic characters in the UK has featured on his own pocket watch. Dan Dare. This watch was made in the middle of the 1950's and on the back was the 'Eagle' emblem to prove it's authenticity. The picture on the front shows Dan being attacked by a flying monster; and his pistol moves up to shoot it while his ship moves in orbit overhead. The whole thing is in full colour and quite striking.

Other heroes from the UK have also featured on watches; Jeff Arnold appeared on a wristwatch at the same time as the Dan Dare pocket watch was produced. He is seated on his horse with one gun firing up and down - again the Eagle emblem is on the back.

And,amazingly, in 1969 there was a Dennis the Menace watch produced; the one I've seen is brightly coloured and captures the character well.

Perhaps with the interest that is growing in UK heroes we will see another 'boom' time for watches soon? I sincerely hope so. And if any enterprising manufacturers are reading this, I'd rather like a V for Vendetta watch myself...

From the 1930's to the 1940's many comic characters were transplanted over to the radio to star in their own adventure series. Their fans from the comics followed them avidly and soon 'secret societies' sprang up. Many were based on newspaper strips like Little Orphan Annie and Dick Tracy, but others were based on the regular comics such as The Justice Society of America. The members became 'Charter Members of the Junior Justice Society of America' and as well as a certificate signed by Diana Prince/Wonder Woman, they received a badge and a de-coder for the messages they were given each issue. This code was based upon the alphabet and various symbols, each symbol 'standing in' for one alphabet letter. i.e. 'Wonder Woman' became 'Zn N A ZnKK ' - rather mind-boggling isn't it?!

Most of these societies had their own secret passwords, handshakes etc and even had beautifully produced manuals to explain everything to the members. Most had a message on the front along these lines 'If you find this and are not a member of _____ please return to owner without opening. As the contents are highly secret.' Which would, I would hazard a guess to say, encourage any finder to open it rather than the opposite. Ah well, maybe people weren't so, er, curious in those days...

The most sought after item by collectors from the days of the secret societies must be the Shadow's Blue Coal Ring - it was made from plastic and had a simulated Blue Coal Stone which glowed in the dark. It was also supposed to give the powers of hypnotism to the wearer.

The Green Hornet was another character who had his own 'secret society' on radio; and in the very first episode we learnt that Brit Reid, The Green Hornet, is the Great-Nephew of the Lone Ranger - in his society, as well as the usual manual etc members received a very attractive ring which had a multitude of purposes; it glowed in the dark, the 'stone' of the ring was actually a brass seal for letters and the whole ring could be opened to conceal secret messages.

Sadly, with the coming of television the radio serials gradually came to a halt and the societies folded. And somehow things like the 'Merry Marvel Marching Society' haven't the same sense of wonder about them...

Badges of course have been one of the most poular spin-offs for generations of fans. Compared to the cost of some of the other spin-offs even the most expensive badge can be afforded by most people. The modern badges that are appearing now I mean.Just think, Cerebus, Superman, Batman, Spiderman - can you think of many superheroes who haven't appeared on badges? The very first badges featured characters such as Betty Boop and Mickey Mouse, but as t the popularity of the first superheroes rose, many badges depicting Superman, Batman and Captain Marvel came along and were joined by more and more superheroes and heroines over the years - if you had one of each badge produced since the first one ever you would have over 20,000 in your collection. Many collectors in the States have made a point of concentrating on these badges, or buttons as they call them.

Badges have been given away with various items over the years, comic characters popped up on badges that were given away with 'Ovaltine' even. And cereals were a good source of badges at one time, the only drawback being that you had to eat your way through a mountain of cereal to collect a full set of the badges, and you can never be sure of what badge is in which packet. (An aside; in my teens I collected a set of Star Trek badges from Sugar Puffs cereal - I've never been able to look a Sugar Puff in the face since.)

There were also the badges you got by sending up a certain amount of labels or packet tops to the manufacturer - these were mostly 'cartoon characters' badges though, although I seem to have vague memories of a Superhero set when I was about nine years old.

A logical extension of the badges were the bronze collectors coins issued by Marvel in the 70's; however, these did not seem to catch on as hoped and only three were ever minted; Spiderman, Conan and Hulk. Personally I liked these coins, and I think a place could be found for them in most collections. They came mounted on key-rings, pendants or individually, and they were easy to store. Maybe they'll be revived someday.

The craze for model kits came to the fore in the 50's and 60's. Originally produced by Airfix, it wasn't too long before other firms jumped onto the wagon, so to speak. And pretty soon there were 'make them yourself' models in every shop you looked in. First to appear were variations on the theme of Superman and Batman, but soon others followed featuring Wonder Woman et al.

All of these kits showed the heroes or heroines smashing through brick walls (what for I'm uncertain of...) or other such action poses. Or even facing a dragon-type of creature. The kits, for the most part, caught the likenesses of the featured heroes too; which is something that you don't find very often. An extension of these kits which has appeared recently, and appeared in fandom what's more, are 'X-Men Chess Pieces' from the X-Men Fan Club. (Okay if I give Geoff a plug,Paul?) If anyone reading this would like more details on them, send an sase to Geoff Lamprey.

You can get them hand-painted or unpainted (to 'do it yourself') and so far Nightcrawler, Wolverine, Cyclops, The Beast, Magneto, Mystique and Pyro have appeared.

Another recent spin-off in the model line are the 2000AD models from Forbidden Planet; these figures would fit fairly well into a 'Dungeons & Dragons' scenario in fact. At the time of typing Judge Dredd, Judge Death and Robo-Hunter have been issued, with the promises of others to follow. Smaller than the X-Men models, they look just as good when painted. Another spin-off from 2000AD is the gold-plated Judge Dredd badge which appeared about the same time as the models, perhaps other UK models will be following suit? There's no reason why it should be the US spin-offs that have the monopoly.

Recently, too, portfolios have come to the fore; featuring various comic characters on high grade paper. They are much sought after by collectors, but sadly out of the price range for many. Portfolios were unheard of when the first comics appeared, but now they are big business - times change, so do collectors.

Now there are so many spin-offs that a collector doesn't really know where to start his collection of them. This seems a shame as there is usually something to suit everyones pocket in the world of spin-offs and something that each individual likes. Perhaps it was better in the early days when there wasn't so much, and everything seemed fresher? Still, keep on spinning!

I cannot end this article without extending thanks to Ross Cowin, for pointing me in the direction of "A Collection of Comic Art and Memorabilia", Charles E. Brown, Debbit & Carol. So many thanks, folks.

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RIP!
POK!
NOW IT'S YOUR TURN, WIZARD!
ZIP!
AW SHIT!

Although this interview is a couple of years old it vhas never seen print before. Steve Dillon is one heck of a talent. Martin Lock put me onto Kev. Kev F. Sutherland had conducted and written up the interview. Add all these ingredients together and you get the following.

BY KEV F. SUTHERLAND

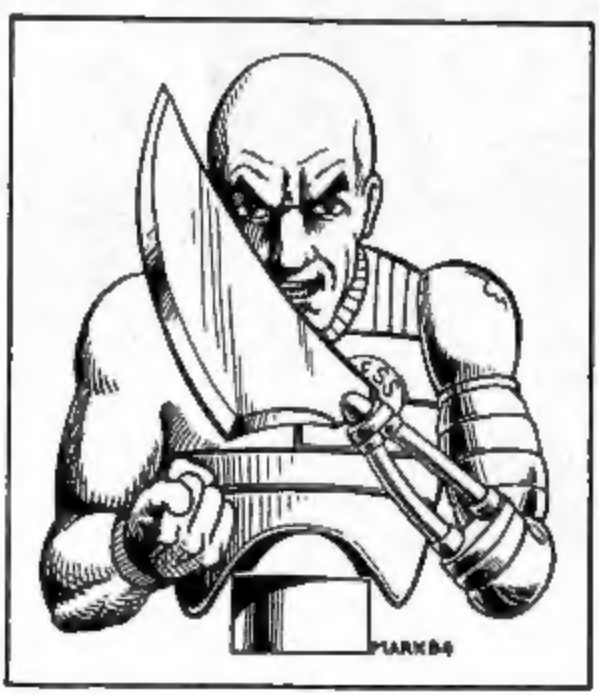
"Well, I was at college for three months and we had two life drawings in that time. I'd liked to have done more life drawing, in fact a little while ago I was thinking of taking up an evening class in life drawing to catch up on some stuff I missed. I would have liked to carry on with that, but faced with the choice of staying at college or getting professional comics work I took the later."

Young Steve Dillon has certainly been lucky as he freely admits, meeting Richard Burton when the latter was still editor of Comic Media News, being invited to illustrate an interview in CMN and, when shortly afterwards Richard became assistant editor at Marvel UK, being offered an interview with Dez Skinn. "That was an 'in', a chance that not many people get." But luck only played a small part because, as anyone will tell you, Steve Dillon is one of the top comics artists in the country. Although he says that without that lucky break he might of given up trying to get into comics and might have studied the sciences instead, somehow deep down you know he's lying.

"Dez liked the first Hulk story I did and said 'would you like to become a full time freelancer?' and I really did. But I thought, well what happens if I leave college, do freelance work, they no longer want me and I'm without work and qualifications? Dez was very good to me and guaranteed me a year's work. Three pages a week on Nick Fury (Hulk Weekly). Three pages a week is quite a lot to do when you're starting out so the result of that was that I did a load of crap. But I learnt quick. There's some stuff in there that I really like. I was panicking most of that year, because Hulk Comic when it first came out sold to a lot of people. To learn in front of 200,000 people is quite frightening, so I was in a perpetual state of panic. But it taught me to draw fast, so when I finally got my drawing together I had the speed to back it up."

When Steve Dillon produced the three page Hulk story that marked his first work as a comics pro, he was 16 , and now he is 23. How much help did the veritable stripling recieve from his colleagues in the business? "I once had a 1½ hour phone call with Dave Gibbons on whether or not I should leave college and go to Marvel. He was great. Everyone's willing to spend time talking to someone coming up, which is great. It's needed. Paul Neary is one of the main people I can thank for my career because when he was working for Marvel I used to go to him with my pencils and we'd sit down for an hour and he'd go over what I was doing. Advise me to change certain things, and tell me why they needed to be changed. That's the important thing, not just to say 'this isn't any good, do it this way', you don't particularly learn that way, but he'd actually explain why the other way was better and that's very valuable." It wasn't just in the early stage of his comics career that Steve found the advice of his peers valuable. For example, during the drawing of the first episode of Laser Eraser and Pressbutton for Warrior his approach to drawing a page changed dramatically; "Well the first three pages of number one I did in what I call my old style, basically bluffing my way through it all the while, hoping it turns out good. And then I went to New York for a couple of weeks, came back and spoke to Dave Gibbons and Mike McMahon about their attitudes towards the black areas in comic strips. They start by putting in all the black areas first in the inking, to get the balance of the black areas correct with the white ones. To make a page seem more solid. I tried that out and it worked. Now if you look at the first Laser Eraser and Pressbutton," we pull out a copy of Warrior 1, and I trust you are doing so at home,"you may be able to see that the last three pages are a hell of a lot better than the first three. And it was all to do with the positioning of the solid blacks.The first three pages are just line, and if they didn't look right I bluffed it around to make it look right like shoving in stuff like that," he indicates some black carpet drawn afoot three panels,"that's all bluff. Some worked better, but more by luck than judgement. That page," we now move onto the 4th page of the story,"I really thought about the use of blacks. I think it's a lot more solid."

So, although it is far too early to say he has settled into a style or technique, Steve has a definite idea of his approach to producing a comic page. "I get in as much information as I need to be able to do the figure correctly, but I like to keep a certain amount of spontaneity in the inking. So I don't want to trace pencils, because you lose something. Anybody can tell the difference between a tracing and something that's been drawn, so I just put in enough information to go as a guideline. A lot of the drawing is done in the inking. Of course the more complex something is the more pencilling I have to do, or I'm going to get it wrong. When it comes to something like Pressbutton, I can do him with my eyes closed. So you just put in roughly where the leg's going to end up, very sketchy stuff, then you draw it in with the inks. Sometimes I bugger it up for that reason. But I think it's worth buggering it up every now and then to keep the spontaneity in it." Does, I ask, the spontaneity ever go completely from the work and it all become a bit of a task? "I've got a low attention span. I tend to swap around, I like to keep my interest up. One of my favourite periods was doing the Future Shocks and Roho Tales for 2000AD. Something different every time. The first Absalom Daak series in Doctor Who was only four episodes and that ended up a complete series so I felt good about that, and it only lasted four weeks, so after that I could go on to something else." But of course not every job can promise to stay exciting for long, and he must get tired of a job he's doing."With anything



you're going to get pissed off at times. When you're facing a deadline you'd rather be doing something else. I'm afraid to say that the tendency is to cheat by leaving things out that the writer has asked for, but still trying to get across the feeling the writer wanted without necessarily doing it the way he wanted you to do it. Like crowd scenes. An example is Blake's Seven. I used a hell of a lot of silhouettes. Very heavy shadow stuff that some people might look at and say 'nice moody stuff' but for me it just meant that I didn't have to draw Avon."

Cheating or not, Steve Dillon gets the job done and can be relied on. The Blake's Seven work he mentioned was done at the last minute when the regular artist Ian Kennedy had a car crash. "It was done very quickly, and had to be done within a week. Trouble is, when the stuff gets published you can't put a disclaimer on it saying 'I did this stuff very quickly.' I'm conscious of that so I try to avoid rush jobs."

Steve classes his Pressbutton strip as his regular work and everything else as a pleasant aside he can do with afforded leisure. "Warrior, although it's very idealistic and I love the project, for the moment it doesn't pay that well immediately. It could end up paying as well as IPC when you get the bonuses coming through. But the bonuses for the strip I'm working on now won't come through if at all for about six months. You don't get paid until publication, which is fair enough because otherwise it gives Dez a very great cash-flow problem. You get paid on publication and the bonuses come through when they get the final sales figures, which is about three months after publication. So if you're short of money you're very hard pressed to work on Warrior stuff because you've still got to pay the landlady." But is he still very happy carrying-on with Pressbutton? He certainly is. In fact the entire Warrior project he decribes as a "seige situation". They're all in it together and very much behind Dez Skinn. The cover of Warrior 4 was a reused Dillon drawing that had appeared as an advert for Quality Comics. "It was originally going to be a cover and Dez, who's an economy minded chap and saves us all money by doing that, because we've all got a share of all the money that comes into Warrior, tries to use it in the best way wherever possible. I think it made a good advert. Dez doesn't pay me for that, but he shouldn't have to because it's saving me money as well. If he'd had to get someone to draw up an advert that comes off the cost of Warrior, it cuts down the profits therefore it cuts down our possible bonuses. Where ever he can save money we're behind him, as long as he doesn't get silly, and he hasn't got silly yet."

You haven't, I suggest, done much work for 2000AD recently. Would there be any reason for that? "Yes. I put that down to being too busy. Part of that's due to being too lazy, because I'm sure if I wanted to I could work a lot quicker. I'm certainly not closed off from 2000AD. If they still want work from me I'd like to do it when I reach a position where I can do it. 2000AD are very good payers. They pay good money and they pay quickly. Sometimes I've had cheques before I've finished a job." Steve's first job for 2000AD was perhaps not a happy one, being arrather unevenly drawn Judge Dredd strip in the 1980 Sci Fi Special. "What happened was that it was in the middle of that strike thing and there was just mass confusion all round. Steve MacManus phoned me up and said 'We're on strike at the moment so I don't know when we'll need the stuff in.' So what I did was I thought I'd better work on something else because I need the money. So I put that aside and the next thing that happened was when Steve rang me up and gave me the deadline again and I realised there was no way I was going to make that so I ended up on a 36 hour stint on some of the pages and it is one of the jobs I am most unhappy about. I really wanted to do Dredd & that was my first Dredd job. I take full responsibilty for it. It was my own fault totally. I do get lapses of enthusiasm and that means I end up rushing things in the end."

When I'd been talking earlier to Alan Moore he'd mentioned a script he'd done for Fleet about a party, a non-adventure strip. This has been passed onto Steve Dillon. "It's based on a real party in Northampton. It's a bloody great challenge, and I want to get enough time to sit down and do it. I've had the script for ages but I haven't got round to it yet. Now if that comes out it's going to be like a Mike Leigh play or something. It's a challenge because you can't use spaceships in a play to make it look visually interesting. There's no hacking up with Pressbutton. If you're not willing to work at it your superficial stuff can get away with it. But when you're dealing with a story set in a darkened room, a party...so the set is basically this room, the kitchen, and a couple of flashbacks to a carpark, it's going to be a great challenge and I'm really looking forward to doing it."

Going over the aforementioned great challenge of a script, we compare it in a way to Neal Adams' Thrillkill story in Eerie. "He must of mapped it out and everything," supposes Steve in admiration. Then he digresses,"In Warrior 6 when V and Evey are coming down the spiral staircase, Dave Lloyd actually went down a spiral staircase and timed the dialogue to find out where people would be when they were saying certain things. I mean this is dedication. You've really got to admire him for that." Steve Dillon is by no means short of praise for his fellow pros. "I love Mick McMahon's work. I love Kevin O'Neill's

work. I like Dave Gibbons' work. I like Dave Lloyd's work. I like Gary Leach's work. Most people I do know I happen to like their work as well. I don't know if that's because I know them. It all comes down to opinions and I do change my opinions as well. I never used to like Mick McMahon's work before I started being a professional. I didn't see what anybody saw in his 2000AD work. And it wasn't until I'd been working in the industry a while that I really started appreciating it. And now I think he's doing some of the most exciting stuff in British comics. So I'm very wary about who I like and who I don't like."

The interview you are enjoying the pleasure of reading was recorded at the Comicana 82 at the Regent Centre Hotel and Steve has only recently emerged from one of yon panel things where a number of questions are asked, and as often not asked, by the audience. "I like turning the mike back on the audience. British audiences seem reticent to ask questions. Whenever I've been at panels in the audience I've asked questions, just to ask questions because nobody else will. At least it gets it going. I remember Hunt Emerson was on a panel with Len Wein, Marv Wolfman, and Chris Claremont for some reason and no one was asking him questions so I asked him a couple of questions because nobody else would. So when I was sitting up in the panel...it's a great experience being on a

panel especially when a couple of years ago you were in the audience, and I'm still not sure how to conquer that. I think I do a lot better than I used to. The thing that worries me is if there is a panel and not many questions are asked, you go away afterwards and immediately a load of people come up to you and ask questions. Now I wish these people would ask questions to the panel. It'd give other people a chance to hear the answers if they're interested. One thing I've noticed about American audiences is that they're not shy." What other things, I ask, struck Steve about America when he went over there? Apparently it opened his eyes about certain aspects of comic collectorism;"I went over to New York and I was collecting at the time and I had one gap in my Adams' Avengers collection. So I went out, saw one for 15 dollars and bought that. I took it back to the hotel and thought 'I'll read it tomorrow', put it beside my bed, went to sleep. Got up the next day, went down to the cafe to have breakfast, came back up and I found the maid had thrown it out with the newspapers. I realised I'd paid 15 dollars for a comic that wasn't particularly worth reading. I'd scanned it, it wasn't a particularly good comic, I'd only bought it to fill in that hole in my collection. 15 dollars. I thought soddit!!! It's not worth it. I don't collect anymore, I buy things I want to own.

As a fan of the not very distant past, what does Dillon think about his and other people's fan art? "One thing I notice looking back at my old artwork and some fan artwork now is, the most important thing to remember is not what to put in but what to leave out. A lot of fan art is overworked. A lot of my old stuff was overworked.If you can learn what to leave out you're on the right track because then you can learn the basics and add the details that you want to put in afterwards. You need a solid foundation for any sort of detailed work otherwise it can get messy." The ensuing conversation uncovered certain secrets that perhaps the innocent would like hidden, like the fact that one of Steve O'Leary's earliest fan productions was The Wombles Monthly. "It was a great hit in our school,"he smiles.

"This is the art director of the Marvel monthlies," laughs Steve Dillon, "this has got to go in the interview!"

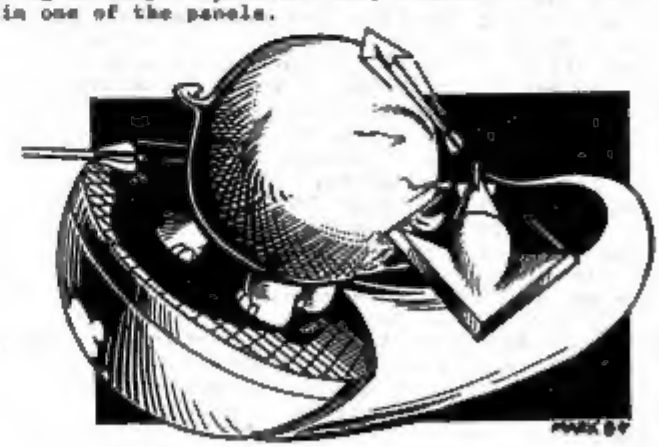
Perhaps the most often demanded question by failed comics artists of the successful is How Did They Learn To Be It? Where did Steve Dillon's exceptional drawing talents come from? Did he just teach himself? "My Father taught me." He admits."I was a first child so I got a lot of attention lavished upon me. If I was enthusiastic about drawing my dad would sit there and teach me how to draw. He was trained as an artist. He went into exhibition work. His trade was signwriting but because he could draw he got jobs like painting massive great boards of the QE2 for an exhibition at Earls Court. He's a bloody good artist. I wish he'd carried it on, he doesn't do it anymore. So I can thank him for a lot of my basic training. I suppose the priorities in my mind turned out with accuracy of figures. I used to draw him a lot, and the family.

"I taught myself the comics language from comics, and when I started in Marvel UK, Paul Neary saved me a hell of a lot of time by pointing out things that would of taken me months to spot.

"A few months ago," we learn,"Joe Orlando & Dick Giordano came over to scout for talent. They saw Dave Gibbons, Mick McMahon, Kev O'Neill, quite a few people including me, and they were offering a DC contract which is a share in everything and DC are very open to people on this side of the Atlantic. Marvel have never made an active move to get people on this side of the Atlantic, DC certainly are. I was going to be drawing The Huntress but I had to ring them back and tell them I was too busy. I would like to do some work for American comics, but I'd like to get into a position where I can afford to do that without breaking commitments. I've committed myself to Warrior."

And talking Warrior, Steve, I'm sure the folks at home are just dying to know exactly how you and Steve Moore go about putting together one of these li'l ole Pressbutton strips. "The way me and Steve Moore work now, and this is what works for us, it might not necessarily work for other people, we get together and Steve has already got the basic plot and what's going to happen in the next episode worked out. He'll sit down and say 'This is what we've got to get into these seven pages ', give me a quick rundown on the main action, and what he wants to get across. I've got a little bit of paper and a pencil in front of me and we go over it in more detail, and I start sketching rough page layouts. Basically I don't put the figures in the panels, just panel borders. I say to Steve 'What's going to go in that panel?' and we discuss it. He'll come up with some good visual ideas and I'll come up with some good story ideas, but still the story's his job and the visuals are my job. But that sort of balance is very useful. We go over that, plan it out, we both plan where the action will end in certain sections and make sure it all fits. Then we've got a rough idea what it's going to look like before the script is even written and before the artwork's done.So then we'll spread out. Steve'll do a script, he'll send me that script. This script is something we've both worked on, so when I do the artwork Steve already knows what it's roughly going to look like. That's a nice balance. I think it balances the full script method and the plot method. The only argument I have against the adding of the script after the artwork is that when I get the chance I like to play around with the facial expressions, basically do acting, & you can only really act if you have the words there. You want to read the words this guy is going to say and you think well what would he look like when he's saying it? Actors couldn't act without the dialogue. So I like to have the script before I do the finished drawing. That's why I think our method's a good compromise."

We have a look over recent copies of Warrior & admire such pieces as the seduction of a girl by Zirk in issue 5, "I was very pleased with that," says Steve, and the layout on the flashback scene in number 3;"If you notice something like that in my stuff, that's when I'm being my most enthusiastic. If it's pretty straight that's when I'm just doing the job. It's true. I hate admiting it to myself but sometimes I just do it and get it out of the way." Which, through no mean contrivance, is precisely what I am going to do with this interview. The modest unassuming Mr Dillon pops up frequently at marts and cons, and shares with most of his peers a great delight in talking to any fans who have any questions to ask,as long as they're positive they couldn't have asked it in one of the panels.



NEXT ISSUE

Walt Simonson (Manhunter,Thor) and his wife Louise (Power Pack,editor for Marvel) discuss their past and future comics in individual interviews.

MEANWHILE WITH WILLOUGHBY
© 1984 BY JOHN JACKSON.
WILLOUGHBY YOUR GIRLFRIEND IS HERE TO SEE YOU
DO TRY TO TALK TO HER IN A NORMAL SORT OF WAY AND NOT AS IF SHE'S ONE OF YOUR SUSPECTS.
WELL IF IT ISN'T MISS WHITE I AM CORRECT IN MY ASSUMPTION AM I NOT?
WHAT? UH WELL .. WE'VE BEEN GOING OUT FOR MONTHS.
STICK TO ANSWERING THE QUESTIONS PLEASE MISS.
WILL YOU DINE WITH ME TONIGHT?
ONLY IF YOU STOP TALKING LIKE A STUPID DETECTIVE
OKAY
E=MC²
4+4=8
55+5-7+2-5-10+20-3=55
I THINK I PREFERED YOU WHEN YOU WERE STUPID
YOUR SOUP SIR
SOUP? I DIDN'T ORDER ANY SOUP. IT MUST BE POISONED!!
THEN AGAIN IT MIGHT NOT BE. I'LL HAVE TO TEST IT
AH. A FLY!! I'LL GET THAT TO TRY MY SOUP OUT FOR ME
HMM IT DOESN'T SEEM TO WANT TO DRINK
SNATCH!!
THAT'S IT.. TAKE A GOOD FEW MOUTHFULLS
OT OH.... IT'S DEAD!!
TAP! TAP! TAP!
HE.HE.HE
DID IT DROWN OR WAS IT POISONED??!!
END.
3

This interview was conducted by post, to allow Alan to answer the questions carefully and not cause any law suits. If you want to find out more bahout the Alan Moore/Alan Davis team then get Fusion 2 (from Hugh Campbell, 46 Kirkland Rd., Kilbirnie, Ayrshire. KA25 6HU for 30p plus postage) which has a very revealing interview with both of them.

After successfully completing his assignments for Marvel U.K. in the back-ups that appeared in Star Wars Monthly and Doctor Who Weekly, Alan Moore was put onto Captain Britain. He replaced Dave Thorpe, who left the strip because of an arguement over Captain Britain getting involved in the Northern Ireland problem. He worked with Alan Davis again. They flourished, Became more adventurous, Killed off everybody. Christ, even Captain Britain got the chop. They moved out of Marvel Superheroes and took up residence in The Daredevils. They flourished. All the old restraints were gone. The two Alans started to work together, to experiment and to win everybody's praises.

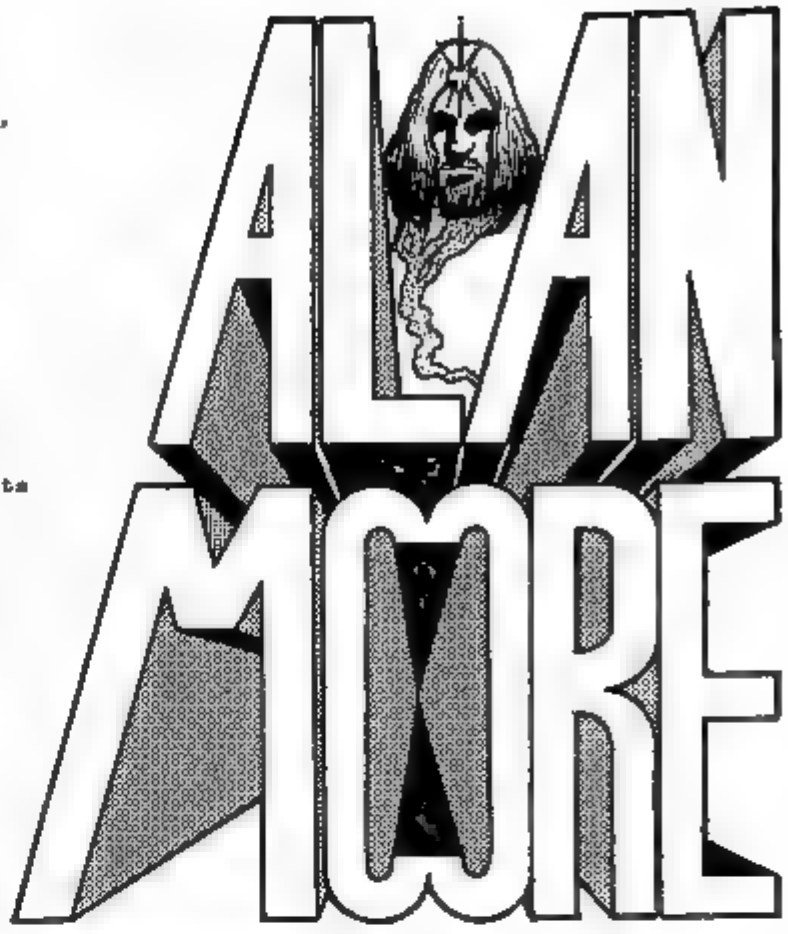
Warrior started. Alan Moore had us by the throats. Both Marvelman and V fo Vendetta were potent stuff. Real people. Real tension. They are still the only reason why I buy Warrior.

The Daredevils stopped. Captain Britain moved on to Mighty World of Marvel. The stories got better. Alan Moore left. Alan Davis continues on the strip in the new monthly

Alan Moore's latest work is The Saga of Swamp Thing. It is the definitive horror comic. Sales are up 50% since Alan started writing it. It no longer carries the Comic Code. It becomes more horrific each time you reread it. Swamp Thing flourishes.

Alan Moore goes from strength to strength. not because he writes to be commercial, but because he writes what he wants to write. He has a lot to say.

Paul Duncan



PART TWO

Paul:While you, and others, were writing Night-Raven in its prose form in Marvel Superheroes, The Daredevils and others, there was an emphasis on the emotions and thoughts of the characters involved. Yet the original comic strip version was more noticable for its action. Obviously, both kinds of approach suit their respective formats but why do you think it is so rare for action and emotion to be combined successfully in either, or both, formats?

Alan:Well, I take your point, but I think I'd say that the terms in which you couch the question are a little askew. As far as I can see, it isn't really that rare to find emotive writing and 'action' writing combined in mainstream literature...as long as you aren't defining 'action' as five pages of fighting to every twenty three pages. Taking an example that most people have read, or at least heard of, Stephen King's books are a pretty good example of this. I think that the truth of the matter is that it's unusual finding someone writing within the comics field who has the ability to convey realistic emotion at all, let alone coherently combined with action sequences. God knows it's something that I myself can't always pull off, and there are people worse at it than me.

As to why this should be...and this is only speculation...it strikes me that there might be some similarities to what tends to happen in the teaching profession, another group concerned with communicating with young people or children. You get someone who leaves school, goes straight to Teacher's training college and then returns immediately to school as a teacher to instruct kids upon Life, without ever having really been there. I think maybe the same thing happens in comics, especially with the fact that most people entering the medium are former fans we hardly have time to grow out of comics before we find ourselves writing or drawing the things. Maybe in some cases the only emotional depth that people have managed to aquire in that time is what they've learnt from back issues of Spiderman or The Hulk. I know that's a pretty horrifying thought, but I think that sometimes happens.

Also, I think it has to be said that in order to write emotionally with any real conviction you have to work yourself up into a self-induced state of near-hysteria, emotionally speaking. It's a bit like method acting, and it takes a lot out of you. If anyone could watch me while I'm actually writing I m sure I'd be committed within a week. Sometimes I sit there with pathetic and unmanly tears streaming down my rugged, handsome face, having completely forgotten for the moment that what I'm writing is just something I cooked up to make a fast buck during an idle moment. Occasionally,I ll have to write a character whose world-view is so extreme that I ll completely depress and unbalance myself for days: The Demon was a good example of that, from the recent Swamp Thing guest spot. To write the character in a way that I found convincing I had to try and immerse myself in a sort of Ultimate Black Cosmic Cynicism, where even the most noble and selfless deeds would be seen as being corrupt and worthless. As I saw it, The Demon could meet Mother Theresa and make everything she'd ever said or done look like the most terrible and devious form of self-serving hypocrisy. Getting inside a character like that, if you're mentally unstable enough to even consider doing so for an instant, can be a pretty shaking experience.

Of course, on the other hand, it's also the only real reward for being a writer. (Apart from the money, limitless sex, fame, and ability to bribe police offic ers.) As a writer, if I'm running well on that particular day, I can immerse myself in absolutely any form of psyche within the limits of my imagination. Swamp Thing is a pleasure to write, because of his viewpoint. Evelyn Cream is interesting to try and write properly, because he's black and I don't have the faintest idea how black people think. Adam Susan and Kid Marvelman were almost as much of a problem as the Demon. And then there are the female characters...by forcing myself to identify with woman characters I can indulge in a sort of cerebral tranvestitism without running the risk of being caught in a public lavatory wearing a corset and pinafore with the Liberal M P. for Dorset. It's a great life, being a writer.

P:When Paul Neary was writing Night-Raven he injected emotions into the previously emotionless lead character, yet when you took over, Alan, you changed the perspective completely with the supporting cast telling the story. The same thing essentially happens in V for Vendetta. Are you afraid that when you do this, it could backfire, and the readers could lose interest because the lead character is too mysterious?

A:As far as I see it, there's enough room within the field to encompass any sort of approach, and the more radical and varied the approaches are, the better. If some readers find the cryptic bits in V a bit too slow and incomprehensible then there's plenty of other books on the stands without the least shred of enigma...in fact, I probably write a couple of them myself. Neither V or Night-Raven were meant to appeal to everybody. I just looked at the characters and tried to work out what I wanted to do with them and then took it from there, without really considering the readership too much. I figured that if there was an audience out there for the stuff that I was interested in doing then they'd gradually gravitate towards me. If there wasn't then I'd either starve or find something more commercial to be interested in.

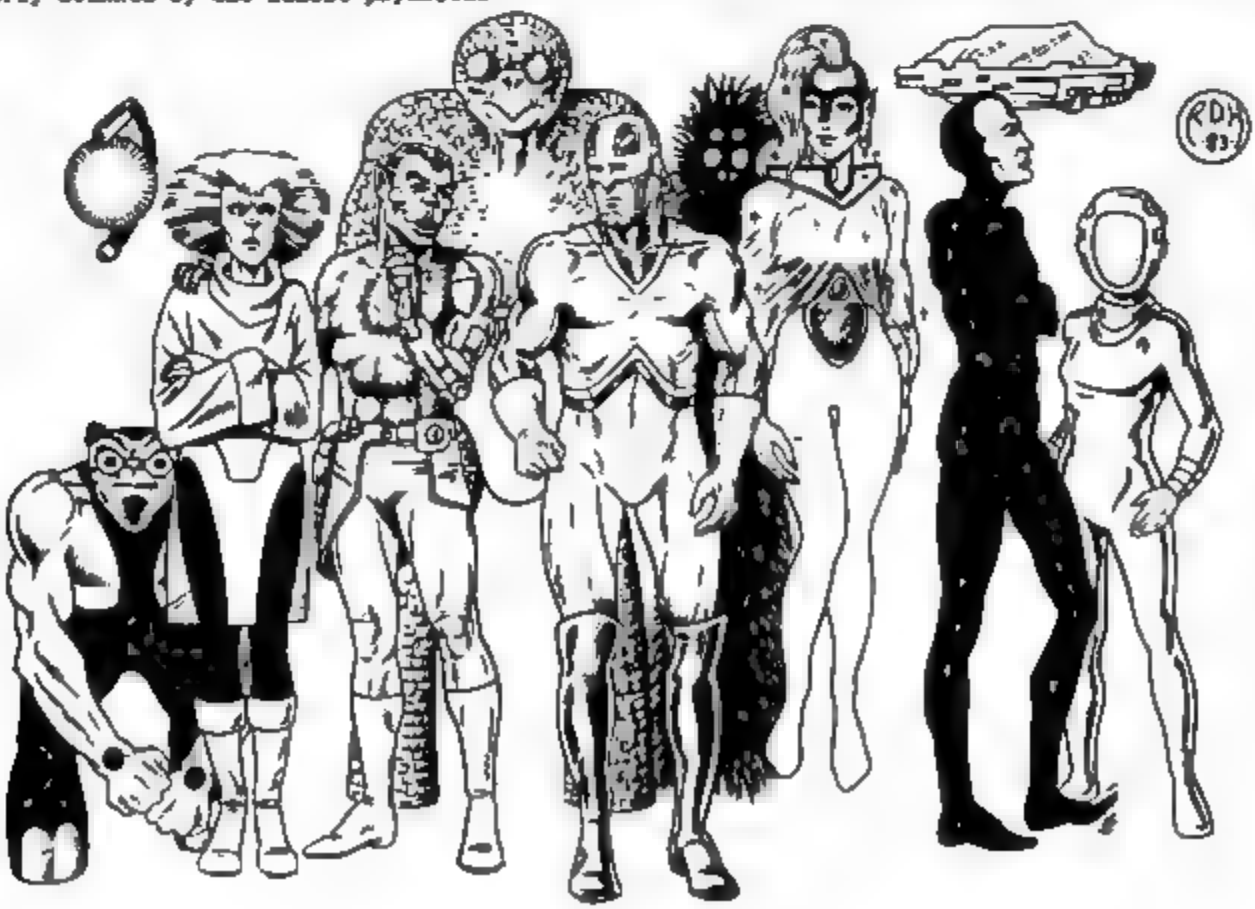
V and Night-Raven present a funny example, really since in some ways, V was an extrapolation of Night-Raven and all the various sources that Night-Raven itself had been based upon:The Shadow, The Spirit, Batman, all the other dark avengers. With V, the mystery is the whole strip, and so I decided to make V as impenetrable as was possible without totally alienating the audience. It's a fine line, and of course, it's up to the audience themselves where they care to draw it.

Night-Raven I tried to treat differently. We do occasionally get a glimpse inside Night-Raven's mind, as in 'The Anaesthetic, Wearing Off', and his motives are always pretty completely explained. At the same time, since he is primarily a mystery character I tried to make him charismatic and unknowable by describing his mental processes, fogged by pain and madness. This is something that Paul Neary originated in the series, and which I liked and tried to expand upon. I'd heard a disturbing radio documentary about people who suffer chronic pain...not just a mild headache or so, but <u>chronic</u> pain, every moment of their waking lives, and they have to either go mad or live with it and control it. Apart from being about the most grim and depressing thing I'd heard all week I was utterly stunned by the almost psychotic courage displayed by some of the people interviewed. Somehow, this all got stirred up in my mind with the elements that I'd enjoyed and absorbed from Paul's Night-Raven, and the stories from 'The Cure' onwards were the result. Also, I suppose part of it was my habitual anal-compulsive desire for orderliness and a tidy continuity...In the Hulk Weekly strips, Night-Raven never used to hiss or betray any sign of acute abnormality. In the early text stories he's suddenly hissing like a trouser-press. By the time Paul had subjected the character to his own wonderfully excessive dementia then he not only hissed, he limped, lurched and had a head full of pea soup. The 'slow poison' idea seemed to tie everything up nicely. Night-Raven was another bloody depressing character to write, come to think of it. Jamie Delano, whose currently writing some brilliant stuff on Night-Raven, tells me that he has the same problem. Why can't I write a nice happy strip like Little Dot or Richie Rich or something? Although probably within three issues Richie would have discovered that his entire fortune had been made by the shameless and inhuman exploitation of peasants in the Third World and hung himself from a sense of crushing cultural guilt....

P:When both Captain Britain and Marvelman first appeared side-by-side on the newsstands, the characters seemed doomed to comparison. However, Marvelman has become dark, mysterious and extremely tense, while Captain Britain has taken the route of the fantastic comedy/drama. Did you lighten the Captain Britain strip as an attempt to make it more acceptable to Marvel, where wise-cracking heroes are the norm, or merely as a contrast to Marvelman?

A:Obviously, with me and Alan doing the only two superhero strips in the country, we were very conscious of the fact that people would inevitably compare them and that one mustn't seem to be a retread of the other. Also, for our own purposes it would be incredibly boring if we were just doing the same thing in both strips.

When we'd thought about it for a while, it seemed pretty obvious that the strips would have a different tone, just by nature of being what they were: Marvelman is a strip that we've built from the groundfloor upwards and we've been careful not to include any extraneous weirdness that doesn't relate directly to the original concept. This means that it is still possible to create a world in Marvelman where there is at least some semblance



of reality. As a result, we can achieve the sort of documentary tension and suspense that normally looks silly and overblown in a comic full of mutants robots, ninjas, space armadas and so on.

In Captain Britain on the other hand, you're completely shafted from the word Go, and you may as well just lay back and enjoy it. You have to say "Yeah, alright, this is the Marvel Universe that this is happening in, nearly everyone in the world has some form of inhuman power and we might as well forget about realism and just try to have fun as stylishly and as entertainingly as possible." If you suddenly have an uncontrollable urge to have Terry Wogan trampled to death beneath the feet of a giant rampaging robot then you can do it. If you want to drop into story that there are an infinite number of parallel worlds and an infinite number of absurd Captain Britain döppelgangers, then you can do it and nobody cares in the slightest. In the Marvel Universe, these sort of things are willingly accepted, whereas in the Marvelman continuity they would look stupid and completely out of place. With Captain Britain, me and Alan tried to take a worthless and largely uninteresting Generic Marvel character and have as much fun as possible. I think, in that at least,we succeeded..

A:I don't think it was totally haphazard...at least, it wasn't significantly more haphazard than anything else I do. There were reasons why the Special Executive were necessary in terms of the plot we had going, and there were purely selfish and personal reasons why me and Alan wanted to include them. In plot terms, we needed something to involve Saturnyne in the saga and to give the saga the propr in the story and to give the saga the proper Omniversal sweep. We also needed something that would slow down the Fury just long enough so that it didn't kill Captain Britain halfway through the story, which it certainly would of done if they hadn't been there. This, of course, is the problem with the Fury.. ..ever since we first used the creature back in Marvel Super Heroes, me and Alan had treated this thing as more or less the ultimate in deadliness. Every single time it turns up, somebody dies, sometimes two or three of them. Logically, unless we were going to wimp out and do something totally unrealistic we had to keep this pace going. The Special Executive made the Fury's temporary defeat at least semi-believable as well as providing the correct number of corpses for a Fury appearance

On the personal side, me and Alan simply wanted to include a strong science fiction element

whether anybody else found it fun is an entirely different matter of course I know that in the time that I was writing it I grew attached enough to the character to feel a bit nostalgic when I was writing the last episode. As a result, it probably reeked of self indulgence, but I figure I have a right to indulge myself occasionally. I work long hours, and surely no jury in the world would condemn me for my occasional miserable little frivolities.

P:Did you envisage an extremely long storyline when you started on Captain Britain?

A:I had the rough overall shape of the story worked out with Alan from the start. I knew that in presenting the Dave Thorpe Marvel Superheroes alternate Earth adventures as merely a 'dry run' of Merlin's devising, we would eventually have to come to the main course. I knew that Captain U.K., Jim Jaspers and The Fury would have to either be introduced or reintroduced to work towards the climax that I had in mind, and I worked it all out from there. I think originally we were planning to do a few more stories not immediately connected with the Jaspers plotline...bits like the Slaymaster piece and the story with Saturnyne and the Executive...but it became pretty obvious after a while that the story was building towards a climax was building towards something happening pretty soon, so we started to tie all the plot threads into the Jaspers continuity in order to work towards some sort of resolution. I think it ran for about the right length If you think of it in terms of American comic book length. .one episode for every three parts of Captain Britain, then it doesn't look quite so extreme or unusual Of course, on the other hand the story did take the best part of two years to tell, which I suppose is a significant chunk of anyone's lifetime. If anyone got bored, may I take this opportunity to apologize?

P:The Special Executive seemed to enter and leave Captain Britain quite haphazardly. Was this merely a tinkering with the overall storyline to launch a new strip?

after the more urban Slaymaster stories. .as I remember, that was Alan s idea specifically. I'd originally been intending to do a two or three part horror yarn involving Sarah Mumford and a couple of other characters from Captain Britain's Celtic/Steve Parkhouse days. Alan felt the hankering to do some science fiction stuff, and suggested that it might be a good time to bring in the Saturnyne/Special Executive storyline that we already had planned. I said fine and it started from there. And, of course, the Special Executive are a lot of fun to work with as characters, especially when you consider that Brian Braddock himself is, as witty and urbane funster Graeme Bassett pointed out in a recent letter, "A bit of a Cosmic Ken Barlowe." In comparison, Cobweb and Legion and Wardog presented me with a lot of opportunity for character-portrayal that I wouldn't otherwise have had. There was never any serious hope of getting a new strip out of it, although at the time we did have our vague longings. The financial situation at Marvel was, as usual, far too tight and too deeply immersed in the economics of reprinting U.S. stuff to consider more than the eight pages of original material we already had.

P:Who designed all the weird costumes and powers for the Special Executive?

A The design for Wardog came from Dave Lloyd when me and Dave worked on 'The 4-D War' After that, for the next story, Steve Dillon was supposed to be doing the art and actually got as far as doing some head and shoulders character designs for Cobweb, Zeitgeist and Millenium. At that point Steve got kidnapped by Palestinian terrorists or machine-gunned in a garage or hit on the head by a tiny meteorite, losing his memory and being found eight weeks later wandering around in St. James Park dressed as a giant chicken, or one of those other things that happen to Steve Dillon occasionally, and the strip was given back to Dave Lloyd who used Steve's sketches as a basis for his own designs on the Executive in that issue.(Black Sun Rising.)

When me and Alan revived the characters in Capt Britain, Alan added his own embellishments to the characters already designed...most noticably to Cobweb, who he more or less completely changed, and then went on to design the Executive members not seen before like Legion, Fascination, Oxo, Lady Burning Fish and all the others The powers were mostly designed by me when I started to try and think of abilities relating to the manipulation of Time for the purposes of the original Dr. Who stories Zeitgeist, for example, doesn't really walk through things. He walks round them in a fourth dimensional sense by phasing his body to a time when, say, the wall in question had not yet been built or has long since crumbled away, presenting no impediment. The visual depiction of these powers, those lovely strange photostat effects that were used in the sequences with Fascination... were all Alan's idea, on the other hand.

P When Captain Britain moved from The Daredevils to Mighty World of Marvel there was a large jump in time for the strip. Was this to speed up the story because you were leaving?

A:No,not really What happened there was that I'd reached a juncture in the story where what happened next in terms of the continuity was that Brian and Saturnyna and Betsy and Tom and everybody had to go down to London, and that Jaspers had to seize control of the country practically overnight with nobody really remembering how it all came about The episode was far too slow and plodding and explanatory, so after talking it over with Alan I decided to take the risk and jump forwards in time by a significant amount, allowing the readers to fill in the intervening time in ,their own minds. I also wanted to try and convey a little of the disorientation of Jasper's reality warping, with events seeming to happen out of sequence It's just one of those things that you sometimes have to try without knowing whether it will work or not ..I'm afraid that if people really want a more adventurous and experimental outlook in their favourite reading material they're going to have to accept the occasional failed experiments That's what experiments are, .you have no way of knowing whether they'll work or not until they've been attempted. As far as 'The Candlelight Dialogues' goes, I really liked it as a story in itself, but I can see that the jump might have been difficult for some people to make.

P Why did you leave Captain Britain?

A:Well, since you asked I left Captain Britain, not because of the growing demands on my time as I think was stated in Mighty World of Marvel, but because I felt that I had been screwed around by their accounts department beyond human endurance. If I didn't want to work in this country, I would of dropped both work for Warrior and 2000AD by now. Certainly, I could earn a lot more if I worked solely for D C. Comics. Being hungry for pastures greener and more lucrative wasn't the reason.

What it came down to was what I perceived as being the wilful contempt in which the money people at Marvel U K. seemed to regard the creative side of the business that was paying their wages. Cheques would be late, you d phone up, you d be assured that they were in the post or that they'd be going out later on the same day and then you'd finally get them a couple of weeks later with no word of explanation or apology Month after month after month. The attitude seems to be that whereas any writer or artist who preformed his or her job so sloppily and missed deadline after deadline would almost certainly find themselves out of work, once the work is actually in and on the editors desk, there is no real urgent need for the publishers to carry out their side of the bargain and get some actual money to you. If this sounds Prima Donna-ish, then I'd ask people to consider how long they d put up with a job in which the wage packet, already being delivered many weeks after the work was originally done, began to become even more tardy and erratic. Also, of course, I was sick to the gills with Marvel after their treatment of Bernie Jaye, leading to Bernie's resignation when they decided to merge The Daredevils with Mighty World of Marvel without bothering to notify her of the fact. People in this industry have a habit of putting up with crappy working conditions purely because they love the work that they're doing, and there are some publishers who exploit this I ve put up with it in the past, in certain areas I'm still putting up with it, but beyond a certain point it just becomes masochism to continue with something that is making you feel angrier and angrier by the day. And that's why I left Captain Britain.

As far as what happens next, the last I heard was that Jamie Delano was taking over the writing on a permanent basis, and I think that given some time to adjust to a completely unfamiliar medium (comics), he'll be writing some brilliant stuff. I've seen his first script and considering that it is just that...the first script for comics of any kind that he's written...I thought it was remarkable.As far as straight prose style goes he's at least as good a writer as I am, and it just remains to be seen how well he can apply himself to comics. Personnally, I'm looking forward to reading it a lot, just to see how somebody else handles characters that I've been living with myself for so long.

P:How did you get the job of writing Marvelman?

A:I've told this story before, so I'll be brief...I wrote an article for the S.S.I. journal, in which they interviewed a number of comic writers on how they worked and everything. One of the questions was what sort of ambitions I'd had for the future. Almost jokingly, I'd said that I'd like to write Marvelman...I say almost jokingly because although I did have what I thought was a pretty good idea for a revival of the character, the chances of anyone actually bothering to revive a character who'd been forgotten for twenty years seemed fairly remote

At the same time, Dez Skinn was putting together the initial idea for what would become Warrior and he happened to mention to Steve Moore that he thought it would be a good idea for someone to bring back Marvelman. Steve mentioned my name and put Dez in touch with me and it all proceeded from there

P:Most heroes of legend and comics have used their powers for some just cause and go out to help people. Marvelman isn't the kind of hero that goes out looking for wrongs to right. He doesn't make things happen: things happen to him. Kid Marvelman found Mike Moran. Evelyn Cream captured him. Liz was kidnapped Despite his powers he isn't in control. Is this the deviation you want from the usual hero-type?

A I think he does make things happen, if only by his passive presence : it was his re-emergence that drew Johnny Bates out of hiding, and Marvelman's existence has had a fairly profound effect upon Mike and Liz Moran, as well as people like Sir Dennis Archer and Evelyn Cream. I try to make the events in Marvelman come about as a natural result of the situation, and if that sometimes makes Marvelman appear to be in less than full control of a situation, then that's how it should be. The main thing that I was anxious to avoid was an endless string of super villains. So far, in the first nineteen or twenty issues of Warrior we've only had two other super powered beings apart from Marvelman ((three now that Marvelday has appeared)) which is what I think of as being about right. Of course, if I did introduce a string of supervillains for Marvelman to knock over it would create a greater impression of him being a strong, forceful and dynamic character, but I think that would be very easy and ultimately incredibly boring. Also, I think that the way we're currently doing it, the reader gets a very strong sense that the rules have been changed without previous notice, and is thus less sure of what to expect. Again, this is how it should be. There should be no guarantee that the supporting cast or even the main character will still be alive next issue. I don't think that I'd be revealing too much to say that current plans call for at least two of my major cast of characters as seen in Warrior to bite the dust eventually. Given the sheer amount of physical danger inherent in the worlds that they inhabit it would be far more surprising if they didn't, after all. And no, I'm not saying which two

P Mike Moran is afraid of Marvelman because Marvelman has a physical/ideological make-up that is very appealing to Liz Mike does not want to lose Liz Marvelman is afraid of Mike Moran because Mike is frail and weak because he is human Will there be a reconcilliation between these two characters, or will this basic mistrust be the cornerstone of future stories, as ever-present as Spidey's webbing?

A:I don't want to give away too much of forthcoming plotlines here, but I would say that the widening gap between Mike Moran and Marvelman will be very significant in Book Three of Marvelman, leading to something quite decisive as a resolution which will significantly alter the course of the entire storyline. Other than that, you ll have to wait and see

P There is a lot of purple prose in Marvelman. Are you putting this in to make a contrast between this and V fo Vendetta? Do you find that putting in all these words and playing out all the metaphors shape the characters and gives them a life of their own?

A Again, this depends upon the strip as much as anything Metaphor and heavy descriptive prose works perfectly well in some settings and looks overdone in others. It's just a matter of trusting your instincts enough to tell you which is more appropriate for the job in hand. As far as the shaping of the characters themselves go, I don't think that has a lot to do with any one given trick or technique. The characters in V are, in some instances, better defined than those in Marvelman, which, as you note, tends to use richer language in comparison to the spareness of V I don t think there are hard and fast rules about characterisation...it has to emerge from the sum of all the other parts. the dialogue, the captions, the sort of environment the story is set in, stuff like that. I think it is a mistake to do as some writers seem to do and say 'Okay, that's my fight scene over with for this issue, now I better do some characterisation ' If characterisation is to appear natural and believable then it must seem to emerge effortlessly from the story at hand without anybody shoving to hit you over the head with it by having some boxo run on and say "Look at me! I'm a Norwegian with a funny accent and blonde hair and I m a guy who's tough on the outside but loves his Mother and in my spare time I listen to Pat Boone records " If someone came up and said that in real life, the correct and logical reaction would be "Who cares?", and that is the reaction that most often occurs to me when I run across that sort of stuff in comics.

P:Do you think that the realistic language of the characters in your strips is necessary?

A:Sorry, Paul, but if I have to answer this one again I shall start chewing my arm. For the record, I don't think anything is 'necessary'. Necessity isn't the issue. All I'm prepared to say is that it s what I feel to be necessary in some stories, and I reserve the right to act accordingly. This doesn't mean that I'm going to write hate mail to Charles Schulz demanding that he has Charlie Brown say "For Christ's sake, Lucy, will you hold that fucking football still?", and I wish people would afford me the same privelege.

P What are your views on censorship, and what do you feel about the situation Knockabout Comics are in?

A As I see it, censorship, much the same as with everything else that afflicts us in this vale of tears, comes down to a matter of personal responsibility Trying to put all this in simple terms so as not to wander off at tangents and waffle, personal responsibility means that I take full responsibility for what I do, say, think, or absolutely anything else that happens to me If I do something wrong, it's not because I had a cold, or I come from a broken home, or because some big boys made me do it. It's because I wasn't strong enough to do something right, and that is my responsibility and I have to live with it.

I accept responsibility, as I say, for myself. I also accept responsibility for my children until they reach an age where I figure they're ready to accept it for themselves. That's where it starts and that's where it finishes Beyond that point I don't have the right to take responsibility for the way anyone else behaves, nor have I the inclination.

Given the above, I detest the idea of censorship In terms of comics, I have nothing against a rating code that would provide a description of the contents ...'For Mature Readers' or 'Full of Tits and Inards' or something like that. In fact I can see that an idea like that would have a lot of practical appeal in the current rating debate going on in the States. But that's description,and not censorship.

I should perhaps point out that I consider censorship unethical no matter which side of the political fence happen to be perpetrating it. Feminists trying to get porn shop closed down is censorship. Left Wing students trying to bar National Front students from having normal social intercourse in University grounds is a form of censorship It doesn't matter how you dress it up, the end result is as morally unworkable as the grotesque censorial thrashings of the current government and numerous governments before it.

The reason I detest censorship is that, ultimately, what the act of censorship is saying is "WE will decide what is best for you and your children to read, see or listen to. You cannot be trusted with the responsibility, so we will take it away from you and see to it ourselves. Have a nice day." That is inavpportable. I simply will not allow some jumped up crypto-nazi greengrocer from Grantham to suppose that she has a better sense of what is right or wrong than I do.

As far as the protection of children goes, you have to leave it in the hands of the parents. By all means see that the parent is as informed as possible in the issues at hand, but do not by any means try to tamper with their responsibility. Nobody has the right to do that.

The trouble is, if you oppose censorship then this somehow gets twisted into the supposition that you applaud films like Driller Killer or 'I Spit On Your Grave . But, unless people are prepared to

actually stand up and fight for worthless, shitty objectionable slices of celluloid sick like the aforementioned, then what they will end up losing is something far more important. This is not an issue of 'Common Moral Decency' or any such phantasm. This is an issue of basic human freedom, and people should guard what is theirs very carefully.

Otherwise, the decision upon what is or is not decent will rest with the Government. By using something 'indefensible', like pornographic content, they will use the courts to squash any kind of publication that they consider to be politically subversive. Anyone who remembers the OZ trials in the seventies will recall how the authorities kept insisting that this was NOT a political trial, it was an 'obscenity' trial. Anyone who read any of the documentation surrounding the case...a book entitled 'The Trials of OZ', published, I believe, by Paladin Books, has a brilliant summary of the situation.. knows that the complete opposite is true. The same thing is happening at the moment with Knockabout Comics. As I understand it, the original request for police investigation came from a point somewhere towards the right wing of the Conservative party. An M P. set the thing in motion and it proceeded from there.

And of course, nobody really gives a damn what happens to Tony Bennett because he's just publishing some Hippy comics and, really, if 'Dr. Atomic' gets banned then it won't significantly affect the quality of our existence, will it? I believe when the office of that well known liberal music journal Sounds were approached for a contribution they responded along the lines of "Why should we give money to a bunch of old hippy dopers?"

The reason, you brainless waste of protoplasm, is because it doesn't stop there. It sets precedents that could, in the hands of an ambitious government, strip the bookshop of anything more thought provoking than Shirley Conran. And of course, by pure blind coincidence, this is all happening at the same time as the Bright Bill prepares to trample all over those godless Video Nasties. I dunno...perhaps I'm making too much of the freedoms we already have, but I suspect that the majority of people won't notice that they have them until they're all gone.

As far as my own work goes, I had some censoring done while I was working at Sounds... though not half as much as Bryan Talbot later suffered, and there's been the odd thing here and there in my script work but nothing really serious that's upset me too much Beyond that, I have found myself sometimes in a position of having to go through a lot of pointless and wearying hassle because of my refusal to change something, but that's something that comes with the job as far as I'm concerned. I m not complaining about my lot

P:How do you and Alan Davis work together?

A:There's nothing very special or unique about the way in which me and Alan work. We perhaps toss ideas round first, albeit more rarely these days since we don't usually get so much time as we used to, and then I'll write the script. Alan will break it down into proper layouts, and then phone me up and check if it's okay to make any changes he thinks are necessary...splitting one panel into two or something like that. Invariably, I ll okay it, Alan draws it, it goes off to Steve Craddock or Annie Halfacree to letter and Voila. Another Triumph From The House Of Ideas! Cripplingly dull isn t it?

P:Last issue you went on, at length, about Fascism. One of the readers said that you were devaluing the meaning of 'Fascism' as we see it today, i.e. concentration camps, Nazis, oppression.

A:I think I understand the point being made here, since it is one that I myself have commented on in the past; During the sixties, words like 'Fascist' and 'Gestapo' were hurled randomly at anyone wearing a uniform, including bus conductors and postmen. This, in my opinion, constitutes a devaluation of the word, using it for a purpose it was not originally intended for.

What I did, or tried to do, in V, was to re value the word. Fascism is not synonymous with National Socialism. As I explained, fascism originated with the Romans,and it originally stood for 'Strength Through Unity'. It was a precise political concept, and as such it could be examined precisely. Since the mid-forties, Fascism has been inextricably wedded to the concept of Genocide, Blitzkrieg, Hitler, Mussolini, The Death Camps and all those other swastika-associations. It can no longer be examined without lots of powerful emotional feelings getting in the way...if anything, it is the confusion between the word 'Fascist' and the word 'Nazi' that has devalued the original concept. All I was trying to do was to remind people of what the word originally meant in the hope that by considering this and it's implications some light might be thrown upon the current manifestations of fascism in our culture. I said that the Family, the girl guides and all those other organisations were fascist organisations, given their structure, and given the original sense of the word. I did not say they were Nazi organisations. If I had done, then I think I d be guilty of trivialising a monstrosity. As it is, I don't think there's a case to answer, really.

Regarding Warrior: I would prefer, as much as possible, to extricate myself from the entire Warrior situation with as little fuss as possible. For that reason, I m not going to be giving out any precise listings of the problems at Warrior that led to me handing in my resignation. I'm sick to the back teeth of how a potentially splendid venture has, at least in my opinion, deteriorated into a swamp of half truth and suspicion, and I don't want anymore to do with it than I absolutely have to. I'd rather just say that Warrior didn't work out the way we understood it was going to, and that I no longer have a great deal of respect or confidence for or in Warrior as a magazine. These are just my personal opinions of course, and I am sure that other people may interpret events differently. I did the best I could for as long as possible, I'm pleased with what I did, I'm angry at the way things have turned out, and I think it's best if I call it a day

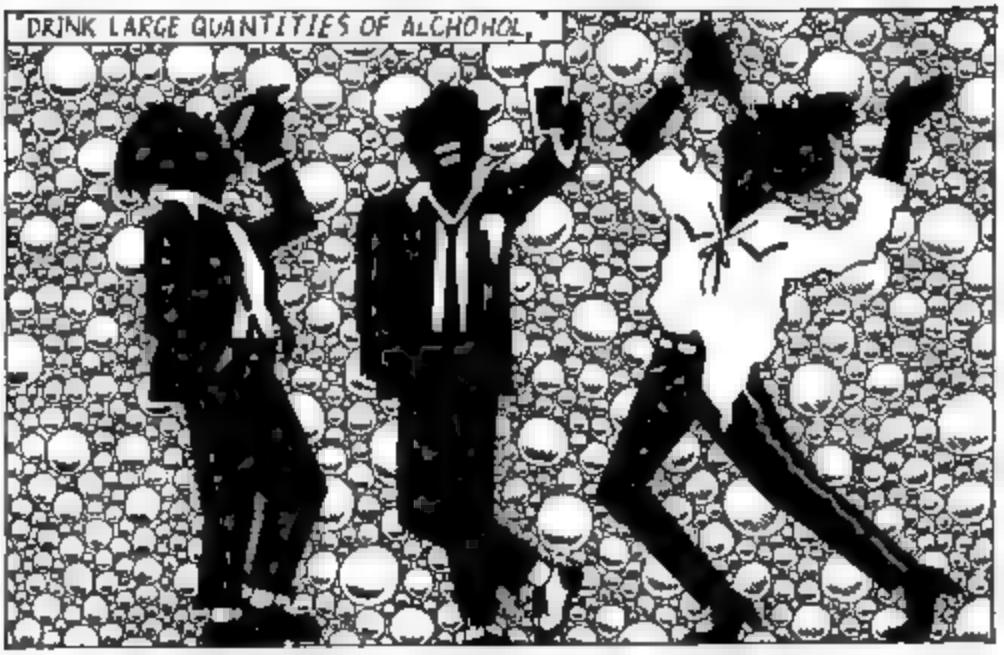
NEXT:

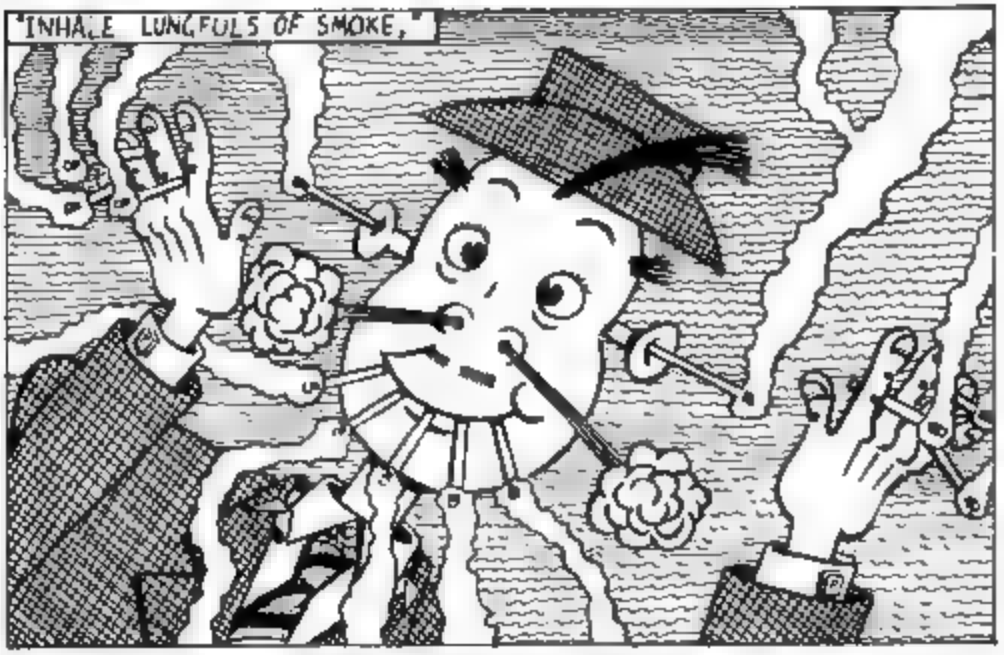
"HELLO THIS IS RATMAN! SPEAKING I WOULD LIKE TO BRING TO YOUR ATTENTION A STRANGE AND MIRACULOUS PHENOMENON WHICH OCCURS REPEATEDLY IN OUR SOCIETY."

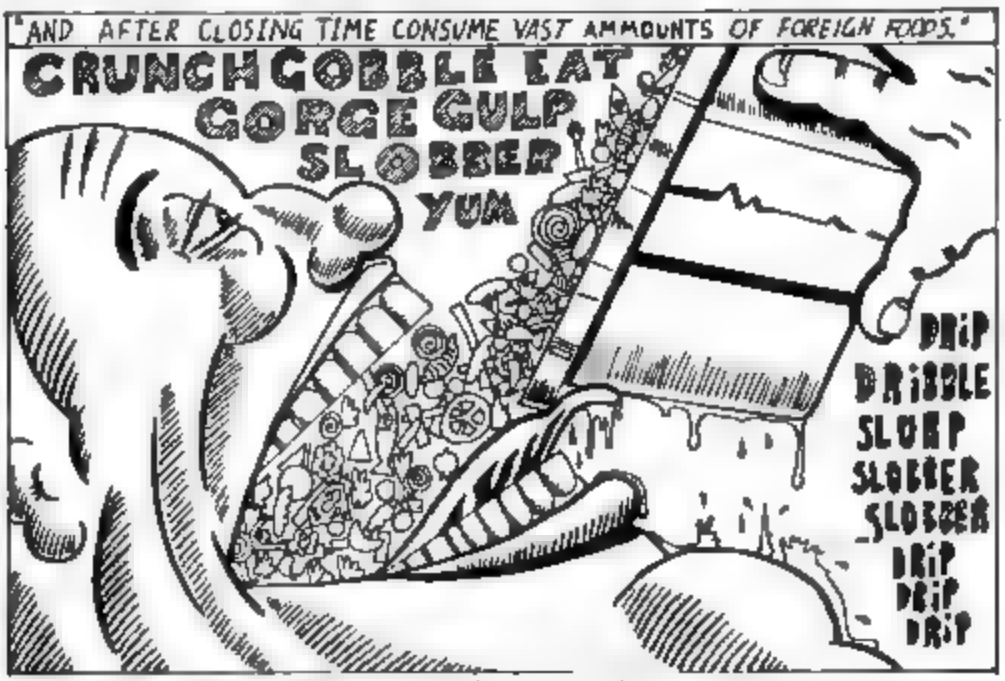
"AT THE END OF THE WEEK, ON FRIDAY NIGHT A LARGE PORTION OF THE POPULATION SEEKS SOME FORM OF ENTERTAINMENT, A RELEASE FROM THE PRESSURES OR BOREDOM ACCUMULATED OVER THE PREVIOUS FIVE DAYS."

"ON FRIDAY NIGHT PEOPLE FROM VARIOUS WALKS OF LIFE ALL SEEK A 'GOOD TIME', AND CURIOUSLY ALL LOOK FOR IT IN THE SAME WAY"

"ASK THESE PEOPLE WHAT IS THEIR FAVOURITE COLOUR AND YOU WILL GET A HUNDRED DIFFERENT ANSWERS, BUT IN THE SEARCH FOR A 'GOOD TIME' INDIVIDUALITY IS SUBMERGED. AS A MASS THEY—"

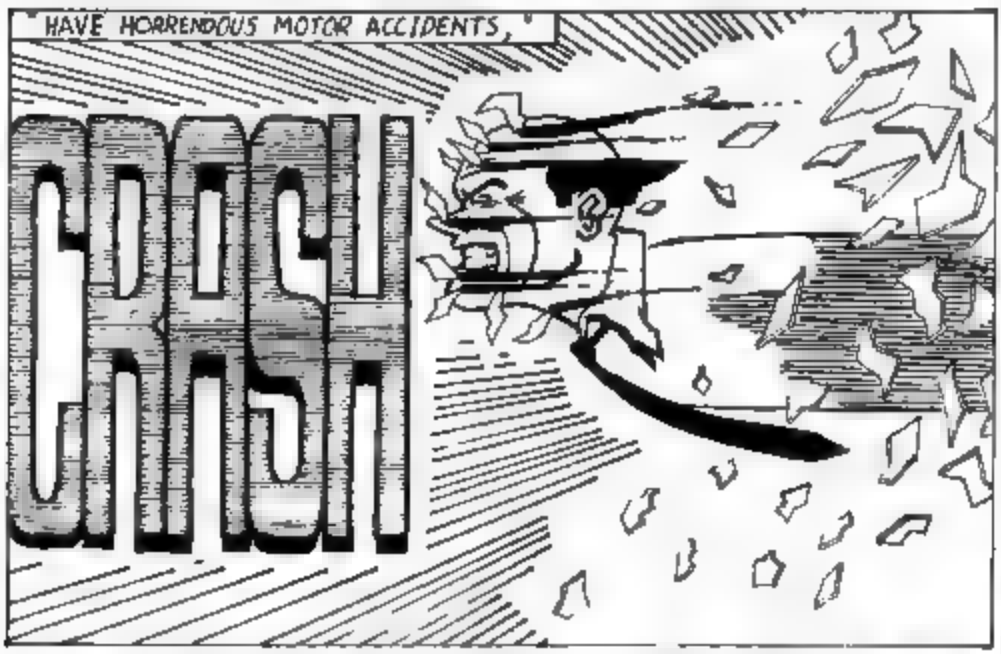


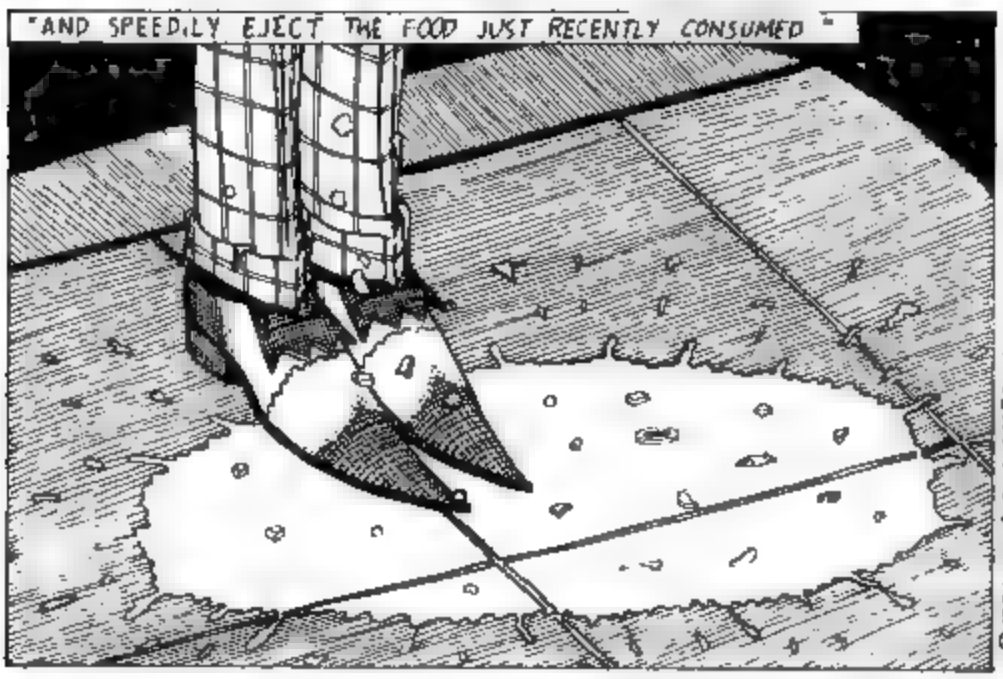


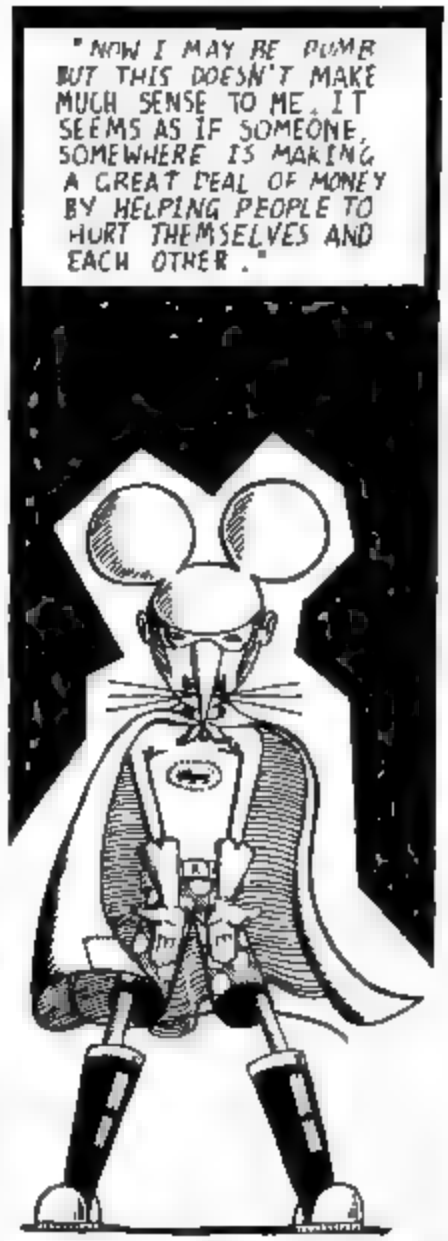


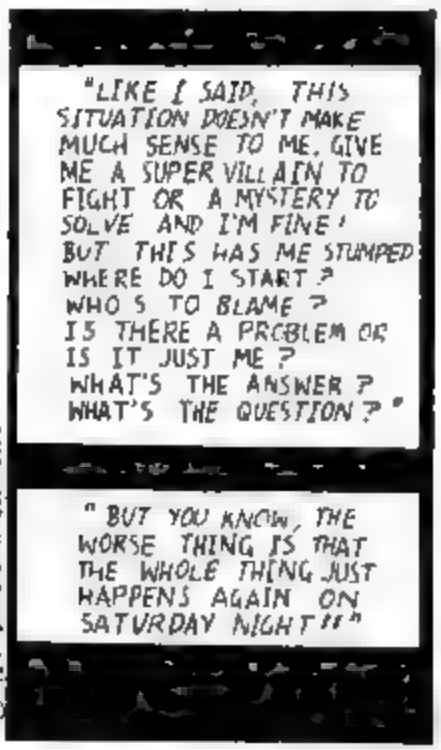
WRITTEN, PENCILLED AND LETTERED IN 1983, INKED IN A HURRY IN 1984 - BAMBOS

"THEY THEN ENGAGE IN DRUNKEN BRAWLS,"


"HAVE HORRENDOUS MOTOR ACCIDENTS,"
CRASH
CRASH


"AND SPEEDILY EJECT THE FOOD JUST RECENTLY CONSUMED"
©1984 James A GORDON


"NOW I MAY BE DUMB BUT THIS DOESN'T MAKE MUCH SENSE TO ME. IT SEEMS AS IF SOMEONE, SOMEWHERE IS MAKING A GREAT DEAL OF MONEY BY HELPING PEOPLE TO HURT THEMSELVES AND EACH OTHER."


"LIKE I SAID, THIS SITUATION DOESN'T MAKE MUCH SENSE TO ME. GIVE ME A SUPER VILLAIN TO FIGHT OR A MYSTERY TO SOLVE AND I'M FINE! BUT THIS HAS ME STUMPED WHERE DO I START? WHO'S TO BLAME? IS THERE A PROBLEM OR IS IT JUST ME? WHAT'S THE ANSWER? WHAT'S THE QUESTION?"
"BUT YOU KNOW, THE WORSE THING IS THAT THE WHOLE THING JUST HAPPENS AGAIN ON SATURDAY NIGHT!!"

COLIN BAKER

Left:A portrait of Colin Baker.Above:Colin Baker looks on intently as Paul Duncan delivers another riveting question.

A couple of months ago I was at the Town & Country Festival. This is a three-day event, and this year there were special appearances by people involved with Doctor Who. On Saturday (25th August) and Sunday, Colin Baker (the sixth incarnation of The Doctor) was present, accompanied by Liz Sladen on the first day and Janet Fielding on the second. Bank Holiday Monday gave us the double-act of Jon Pertwee and John Nathan-Turner(the producer).

Having been goaded into it by my compatriates (Steve Howell, Ian Mitchell and Nick Wade) I humbly walked over to Colin and asked him if I could interview him for a few minutes. By some amazing fluke of luck (and kindness) Colin's agent said 'Yes'. Picking myself off the floor, we arranged a time to meet.

Several sets of fingernails later, the whole thing started. I asked the questions and Nick Wade took the photos, as well as butting in with questions at prearranged times (i.e. when I dried up.) Colin Baker, surprisingly, could still move his body after the horrendous attacks on his person by hundreds of autograph hunters during the day, and so the interview proceeded.

I would like to thank:Colin for his time, and remaining stores of energy; Nick Wade and Martin Donald for supplying the photos.

aul:How did you start acting?
olin:Oh, you've asked me further back than I expected to be asked. The first time I appeared on stage as at school, playing Phyllis in Iolanthe, which was he leading soprano role. I got a review in the school agazine which said, "Colin Baker threw himself with erve into the part of Phyllis and rarely strayed more han an octave from the notes." At the time I thought hat was a really good review. Thereafter I appeared n the Gilbert & Sullivan every year at school. When left school I went with my Mother to see an amateur roduction of The King And I at the Palace Theatre, anchester. I said to my Mother 'I'd love to do that' nd the man sitting in front of me turned around and aid 'I am the President of this Society. If you'd ike to join come along next Friday night.' So I oined the North Manchester Amateur Dramatic Society nd I got really hooked on it. I was studying Law at he time and after five years I thought 'Stow this for game of soldiers. I'll have a go at doing what I ant to do. I only have one life so I'll have a try.' o I went to Drama school and started acting.
:So all your early work was as a singer.
:Yes, which is amazing when you consider I have a voice that makes Lee Marvin sound like an Opera inger.
:What was your first acting job on TV then?
C:That was a series called Roads To Freedom which was an adaptation of a French book set in the 1930's. I played a rapist and I had to rape the leading character played by Allison Fisk. As a result of that I got stuck in the groove of playing bad guys, which led up to me playing Paul Meroni in The Brothers. That was 1970, so I'd only been at it a year. I was lucky to get into TV so quickly.
P:Did you mind having to play baddies?
C:I never did mind it because the bad characters are always the most interesting to play.
P:I thought you were going to say that.
C:What is nice about the Doctor is that even though he is essentially a good character, he's not just bland good. He has many facets to his personality and, bearing in mind that he is an alien, some are difficult for humans to understand. When he's a little bit curt to his assistant. Impatient. Irrascible. I think that these are very important things for the Doctor to have. For him to behave in exactly the same way as a human behaves would be a shame. It would be wasting the character.
P:The way I see it, from the little I've seen of your version of the Doctor, you change your face, going with whatever's going on, but really having a plan of your own. Would you say that was a fair comment?
C:No, I don't think so. The Doctor doesn't fit in with the surroundings at all. He's more capricous than that, and would do the opposite. If everyone was one thing, then the Doctor would be different. He's not a slavish follower of anybody. He is prone to reacting very differently to exactly the same situation, according to the way he feels. The one thing he'll always do is champion the cause of the weak. In casual conversation he won't always be polite. That's an Earthly concept. He can't be bothered with the social graces.
Nick:How did you get the part of the Doctor?
C:I had done a story, Arc of Infinity, in which I played Maxil, the Chief of Security on Galifrey. Obviously, I got to know John Nathan-Turner. One of the floor managers was getting married and we got on very well so she invited my wife and I to the wedding. John was there, and was thinking about a new Doctor because he had just heard Peter Davison was leaving. As a result, because of that day he thought I would be a good idea for the role. So he rang me up the next day and we talked about it. He showed me tapes of all the Doctors and I said how I would play it, and because he's a man of infinite taste and wisdom he offered me the part.

A little rider, which is interesting, is that in The Five Doctors they asked me to play Maxil again, but I couldn't because I was doing something else. If I had taken the part it would have been too

Above:Colin Baker doing his bit for the public.Opposite page:Top;Jon Pertwee needed no urging to hop aboard the Whomobile:Bottom;Liz Sladen and Colin Baker.

close, and perhaps I wouldn't be playing the Doctor.
P:Does the fact that you like science fiction influence you in the part?
C:I don't think so. I'm not sure. I'm not mad keen, but science fiction is what I've read more of. There are some authors I've got every book of like Ursula Le Guin, Anne McCaffrey, Frank Hebert. I've just been reading the Thomas Covenant books.
P:I'm not too keen on reading the fantasy stuff myself.
C:You're not? I've been reading Fantasy more than anything else recently.
P:Do you think it is because it ties in with Doctor Who? It is more fantastic, even though they put in the science.
C:Doctor Who fits through all the catagories really. It's anything you want. It's like Hamlet talking to the actors saying 'What sort of plays do you put on?' Tragical. Comical. Farcial. Historical. Everything.
P:Do you think that's one of the reasons it's carried on for so long?
C:Yes. And it's traditionally English and old-fashioned. It's not competing with Star Wars or Battlestar Galactica in the hardware department. It's plasticine and string.

The Doctor is one of those magical characters that's been built up by five brilliant actors and some excellent scriptwriters. It could go on forever.
P:What made you decide to wear the funny clothes?
C:Well, it was very hard to come up with ideas for clothes. I had lots of character ideas but none for the costume. John Nathan-Turner had the idea of making it very bad taste, but the costume designers kept coming up with great ideas. They found it hard to design stuff that was bad taste actually because, obviously, they're used to designing good things.This is the end result, and even though it is clashing and bad it grows on you. I'm rather fond of it.
P:What ambitions have you got in Doctor Who?
C:No specific ambitions. I want everyone who watches Dr. Who not to be disappointed I'm playing it. I think we all have our favourite Doctors and it is usually the one who was the Doctor when you started watching it. You leave blocks of loyalty behind you. There's a huge following for Tom Baker. A strong following for Peter and maybe in 10 years time the fans will feel the same way about me I hope. That's nice, as long as nobody says 'This is the ONLY Doctor' and all the rest of it. That's silly because they've all brought something to the part. They're all very good actors.
P:Who's your favourite Doctor?
C:Baker...Colin Baker.
P:Has anything gone wrong during recording?
C:No, not yet. It's very boring isn't it? We're so good that we do it dead right.

Oh, there was one, when we were doing Vengeance on Varos, which was the last story we finished. I have to tell you without giving too much away. There was a hanging scene, and I had the noose around my neck. Then the platform gave way. Luckily it was the part next to me where people fell through. It could of been me, and I could of been hung.
P:That would of been a short career.
C:Yes.
P:Have you ever had accidents before while filming?
C:When I was doing War and Peace I tripped over and all the extras who were running after me, instead of stopping just trampled me to the ground. Things like that do happen.
P:Don't you get danger pay?
C:No, never. I don't get any pay at all really.
P:Did you and Pat Throughton get on well while doing The Two Doctors?
C:I've known Pat for a long time. I shared a flat with his son, David, for many years when I was first starting out. David was in the Curse of Peladon. I was his best man at his wedding so obviously I met his Dad then. Over the years I've met Pat many times and he's wonderful to work with. He's an excellent actor.
P:Pat brought a lot of elements of the clown to the show. Will you try to get away from that?
C:No. Obviously each person will do it differently. I'm not a clown in his sense, but I have my own eccentricity.
P:You're more a Harlequin. A devious clown.
C:Yes. He's more deliberate ,unless he's in a passionable rage.
M:Have you based your character of the Doctor on yourself, or is it mostly made up?
C:It's a lot made up with ingredients of the previous Doctors. Pertwee's adventure sense. I like that, the derring-do, swinging from ropes and I want Eric Saward to write in things like that because I enjoy it. Hartnell's irrascibility. Tom Baker's irreverance, up to a point. The one thing I don't want to do is belittle the monsters. I think that if you start joking and clowning around when being threatened by a Cyberman or Dalek. It's so easy to make them look as though they are not very threatening. When analysed a Dalek is a very difficult thing to be frightened of because it can't even climb a flight of stairs. And once you start sticking jelly babies in the end of their noxzles then it makes life difficult, because it has to work for the audience.
P:Are there any new monsters in the upcoming season?
C:Oh, there's lots of new ones, and some old ones. Until I know what was on the last official release of the BBC I won't say a word.

NEXT ISSUE

William Gaunt, who now appears in the BBC comedy No Place Like Home, talks about his early career in The Champions and Sgt. Cork. Not to be missed.

Next issue out early December

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